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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION: HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Report of the Second Committee (Part VI)*

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 96 (see A/51/604, para. 2). Action on sub-item (e) was taken at the 30th and 37th meetings, on 7 November and 2 December 1996. An account of the Committee's consideration of the item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/51/SR.30 and 37).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS A/C.2/51/L.15 AND L.15/Rev.1

2. At the 30th meeting, on 7 November, the representative of Costa Rica (on behalf of the States Members that are members of the Group of 77 and China) and Colombia (on behalf of the States Members that are members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries) introduced a draft resolution (A/C.2/51/L.15) entitled "Implementation of the decisions adopted by the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)", which read:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolutions 47/180 of 22 December 1992, 49/109 of 19 December 1994 and 50/100 of 20 December 1995 on the convening of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II),

* The report of the Committee on this item will be issued in several parts, under the symbol A/51/604 and addenda.

"Recognizing the important role of cities and urban areas in economic, political, social and cultural development, and stressing the need to address urgently and comprehensively the deteriorating conditions in rural and urban areas, particularly in developing countries,

"Also recognizing the critical problems common to human settlements in the developing countries, including poverty, unemployment, social disintegration, inadequate shelter and lack of proper maintenance of urban and rural infrastructure and services,

"Cognizant of the importance of maintaining the momentum already generated at the national, regional and international levels for the implementation of measures designed to alleviate the deteriorating living conditions of increasing populations in both urban and rural settlements worldwide,

"Having considered the report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of and follow-up to the Conference, including the role played by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements,

"1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II);

"2. Endorses the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and the Habitat Agenda adopted by the Conference on 14 June 1996;

"3. Expresses its profound gratitude to the Government and people of Turkey for their generous support and for the excellent facilities, staff and services placed at the disposal of the Conference and hospitality extended to the participants;

"4. Acknowledges with appreciation the contribution to the successful organization and effective servicing of the Conference made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the Conference and their dedicated staff;

"5. Also acknowledges with appreciation that the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) provided a major opportunity to synthesize the actions and commitments of previous United Nations conferences and summits;

"6. Takes note of the active involvement in the Conference of all States and other relevant actors, and recognizes with satisfaction the innovative mechanisms introduced by the Conference to forge partnerships among various actors;

"7. Calls upon all Governments, organizations of the United Nations system and other actors concerned with human settlements and urban management issues, such as local authorities, relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, parliamentarians, the private sector, trade unions, academicians and other community groups, to implement, fully

and effectively, the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and the Habitat Agenda, and to give both instruments the widest possible dissemination;

"8. Invites all Governments to further encourage and support all relevant actors of civil society, including the private sector, in the implementation and follow-up of the Habitat Agenda by establishing effective partnerships and by creating an appropriate framework, in accordance with their respective national conditions, to further facilitate and expedite such actors in addressing human settlements issues, particularly servicing, finance mobilization, the provision of adequate shelter and related areas;

"9. Reaffirms that in formulating human settlements policies and strategies, all countries should simultaneously address the needs of both rural and urban areas;

"10. Calls upon all Governments to establish or strengthen, as appropriate, participatory mechanisms for the implementation, assessment, review and follow-up of the Habitat Agenda and national plans of action;

"11. Emphasizes the need for all countries and for the international community to promote an integrated and multidimensional approach for the implementation and follow-up of the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and the Habitat Agenda at all levels;

"12. Invites all States to enhance their bilateral, subregional and regional cooperation and to take all other appropriate initiatives to contribute to the review and assessment of the progress made in the implementation of the Declaration and the Habitat Agenda;

"13. Reaffirms that the General Assembly, as the highest organ for policy formulation, the Economic and Social Council, in exercise of its overall coordination mandate in the economic and social fields in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 48/162 of 20 December 1993 and 50/227 of 24 May 1996, and the Commission on Human Settlements shall together constitute a three-tiered intergovernmental mechanism to oversee the coordination of activities for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda;

"14. Decides that, at its special session to be convened from 23 to 27 June 1997 for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of Agenda 21, the Assembly shall give due attention to the issue of human settlements in the context of sustainable development;

"15. Also decides to review, at its fifty-second session, the effectiveness of the steps taken to implement the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II);

"16. Further decides to convene a special session of the General Assembly in the year 2001 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human

Settlements (Habitat II), including the identification of obstacles, with a view to considering further actions and initiatives, and to that end requests the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its fifty-fourth session, in 1999, a report containing recommendations for consideration of the format, scope and organizational aspects of such a special session;

"17. Reaffirms that the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with its role under the Charter of the United Nations and its relevant resolutions and decisions, shall oversee system-wide coordination in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and make recommendations in that regard;

"18. Invites the Economic and Social Council to review the follow-up of the Habitat Agenda at its substantive session of 1997 and to consider convening meetings of high-level representatives to promote international dialogue on the critical issues pertaining to adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development, as well as on policies for addressing them through international cooperation;

"19. Also invites the Economic and Social Council to consider dedicating one of its high-level segments before 2001 to human settlements and the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, with the active involvement and participation of, inter alia, the specialized agencies, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund;

"20. Requests the Economic and Social Council to review the mandate of the Commission on Human Settlements, in accordance with Assembly resolution 50/227, with a view to strengthening it, taking into account the Commission's responsibilities for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, as well as the synergy with other related United Nations bodies, and the modalities for an effective system-wide approach to the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II);

"21. Also requests the Commission on Human Settlements at its forthcoming session, in 1997, to review both its work programme and that of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements in order to ensure an effective follow-up and implementation of the outcome of the Conference, and to make recommendations thereon to the Economic and Social Council;

"22. Further requests the Commission on Human Settlements to review its working methods at the same session in order to involve the representatives of local authorities and the relevant actors of civil society, particularly the private sector and non-governmental organizations, in its work in the field of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development, taking into account the relevant provisions of Council resolution 1996/31;

"23. Decides that the Commission on Human Settlements, as a standing committee of the Economic and Social Council, will monitor, review and assess the implementation of the Habitat Agenda at the national, regional and international levels;

*24. Also decides that, starting from 1997, the Commission on Human Settlements shall meet annually to ensure a sustained follow-up and accelerated implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) at the national, regional and international levels;

*25. Further decides that the Commission shall assist the Economic and Social Council in its coordination of reporting on the implementation of the Habitat Agenda by the relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, and shall draw upon inputs from other organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and other sources, as appropriate;

*26. Decides that the Commission on Human Settlements, in developing its work programme, shall examine the Habitat Agenda and consider how to integrate in its programme of work the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), and shall also consider how it could further develop its catalytic role in promoting adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development;

*27. Reaffirms that the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements shall be the lead agency and focal point within the United Nations system for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda;

*28. Requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations, before the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, to undertake an assessment of the Centre's functions with a view to its revitalization, and to provide it with adequate human and financial resources within the regular budget of the United Nations so as to enable it to discharge its functions and responsibilities fully and effectively, as elaborated in the Habitat Agenda;

*29. Also requests the Secretary-General to include the implementation of the Habitat Agenda in the mandates of the Administrative Committee on Coordination with a view to facilitating an integrated and coordinated implementation of the cross-cutting themes of the global conferences;

*30. Further requests the Secretary-General to consult with Governments, the various organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, international financial institutions and the various bilateral aid organizations and agencies with a view to promoting an exchange of information among them on the resource requirements for international assistance in the field of adequate shelter for all and human settlements development;

*31. Acknowledges the importance of the regional and subregional activities undertaken during the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), including the regional strategies, plans and declarations adopted as part of the preparatory process, and invites the regional commissions, other regional and subregional organizations and the regional development banks to examine the results of the Conference within their respective mandates with a view to

identifying the actions to be taken, at the regional and subregional levels, for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda;

"32. Invites the regional commissions, in cooperation with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, the regional intergovernmental organizations, and the regional and subregional development banks, to consider convening, on a biennial basis, a meeting at a high political level to review progress achieved towards the implementation of the Habitat Agenda at the regional level;

"33. Requests all the relevant United Nations organizations and specialized agencies to identify the specific actions that they will undertake, within their mandates, towards the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, and invites them to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, through the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1997, on their specific plans and activities;

"34. Invites the Bretton Woods institutions to be actively involved in the implementation and the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), and to enhance their cooperation with the United Nations system for that purpose;

"35. Stresses that the effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda will require an increased commitment of financial resources, both domestically and externally, and in that context calls upon the developed countries to complement the national financial efforts of developing countries on human settlements development and urban management, and intensify their efforts to transfer new and additional resources to the developing countries within the framework of paragraphs 203 and 204 of the Habitat Agenda in order to ensure the effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda;

"36. Emphasizes the importance of ensuring the early identification and allocation of financial resources by all members of the international community, including United Nations funds and programmes, the Bretton Woods institutions and regional financial institutions, so as to enable them to fulfil their commitments with regard to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda;

"37. Appeals to all Governments, especially the Governments of developed countries and others in a position to do so, as well as international and regional financial institutions, to contribute generously to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation in order to support the implementation of the Habitat Agenda;

"38. Calls upon the organizations, programmes and funds of the United Nations system and the regional commissions to provide their full and active support to the effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda, particularly at the field level, and invites the relevant specialized agencies to do the same;

"39. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, through the Economic and Social Council, on the implementation of the present resolution;

"40. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of subsequent sessions of the General Assembly a standing item entitled 'Implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)'."

3. At the 37th meeting, on 2 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Mohammad Reza Hadji Karim Djabbary (Islamic Republic of Iran), informed the Committee of the results of the informal consultations held on the draft resolution and drew its attention to a revised draft resolution contained in document A/C.2/51/L.15/Rev.1, entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). Turkey subsequently joined in sponsoring the revised draft resolution.

4. The Committee was informed that there were no programme budget implications for the revised draft resolution.

5. The representative of the United States of America proposed an amendment to the revised draft resolution, by which, in operative paragraph 19, the words "from within existing resources" would be deleted after the words "a comprehensive and in-depth assessment".

6. Before the adoption of the revised draft resolution, the representative of South Africa made a statement (see A/C.2/51/SR.37).

7. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted revised draft resolution A/C.2/51/L.15/Rev.1, as orally amended (see para. 9).

8. After the adoption of the draft resolution, the representative of Norway made a statement (see A/C.2/51/SR.37).

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE

9. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Implementation of the outcome of the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 47/180 of 22 December 1992, 49/109 of 19 December 1994 and 50/100 of 20 December 1995 on the convening of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II),

Recognizing the important role of cities and urban areas in economic, political, social and cultural development, and stressing the need to address

urgently and comprehensively the deteriorating conditions of shelter and human settlements in rural and urban areas,

Also recognizing the critical problems common to human settlements in the developing countries, including poverty, unemployment, social disintegration, inadequate shelter and lack of proper maintenance of urban and rural infrastructure and services,

Cognizant of the importance of maintaining the momentum already generated at the national, regional and international levels for the implementation of measures designed to alleviate the deteriorating living conditions of increasing populations in both urban and rural settlements,

Recognizing the interdependence of rural and urban development,

Having considered the report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)[1] and the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of and follow-up to the Conference, including the role played by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements,[2]

Expressing its profound gratitude to the Government and people of Turkey for their support and for the facilities, staff and services placed at the disposal of the Conference and the hospitality extended to the participants,

Also expressing its appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the Conference and the staff of the Secretariat for the effective preparations and services provided for the Conference,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II);[1]

2. Endorses the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements[3] and the Habitat Agenda[4] adopted by the Conference on 14 June 1996;

3. Acknowledges with appreciation that the Conference provided a major opportunity to build upon the actions and commitments of previous United Nations conferences and summits;

4. Recognizes with satisfaction the active involvement in the Conference of all States and other relevant actors, and the innovative arrangements introduced at the Conference to forge partnerships among various actors;

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[1] A/CONF.165/14.

[2] A/51/384.

[3] A/CONF.165/14, chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[4] Ibid., annex II.

5. Reaffirms the commitment to the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing, as provided for in international instruments, and in that context recognizes an obligation by Governments to enable people to obtain shelter and to protect and improve dwellings and neighbourhoods;

6. Recognizes that Governments have the primary responsibility for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, and further recognizes that the international community should support Governments in their efforts, by promoting international cooperation for, inter alia, the establishment of an open, equitable, cooperative and mutually beneficial international economic environment;

7. Calls upon all Governments, organizations of the United Nations system and other actors concerned with human settlements and urban management issues, such as local authorities, relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, parliamentarians, the private sector, trade unions, academicians and other community groups, to implement, fully and effectively, the Habitat Agenda, and to give both the Habitat Agenda and the Istanbul Declaration the widest possible dissemination, and in that context, to draw attention to the best practices initiative;

8. Invites all Governments to further encourage and support all relevant actors of civil society, including the private sector, in the implementation and follow-up of the Habitat Agenda by establishing effective partnerships and by creating an appropriate framework, in accordance with their respective national conditions, to further facilitate and expedite such actors in addressing human settlements issues, particularly servicing, finance mobilization, the provision of adequate shelter and related areas, and in that process to emphasize the need to integrate the gender perspective;

9. Reaffirms that in formulating human settlements policies and strategies, all countries should recognize the interdependence of rural and urban areas and address the needs of both in a balanced manner;

10. Calls upon all Governments to establish or strengthen, as appropriate, participatory mechanisms for the implementation, assessment, review and follow-up of the Habitat Agenda and national plans of action;

11. Emphasizes the need for all countries and for the international community to promote at all levels an integrated and multidimensional approach to the implementation and follow-up of the Habitat Agenda;

12. Reaffirms that all States should exert concerted efforts to achieve the implementation of the Habitat Agenda through bilateral, subregional, regional and international cooperation, as well as through the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, and that States may also convene bilateral, subregional and regional meetings and take other appropriate initiatives to contribute to the review and assessment of the progress made in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda;

13. Also reaffirms that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United

Nations and relevant resolutions, including Assembly resolutions 48/162 of 20 December 1993 and 50/227 of 24 May 1996, and together with the Commission on Human Settlements, shall constitute a three-tiered intergovernmental mechanism to oversee the coordination of activities for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda;

14. Recommends that, at its special session to be convened from 23 to 27 June 1997 for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of Agenda 21, the Assembly give due attention to the issue of human settlements in the context of sustainable development;

15. Reaffirms that the General Assembly should consider holding a special session in the year 2001 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), including the identification of obstacles, considering further actions and initiatives, and that a decision on this matter should be taken at its fifty-second session;

16. Reaffirms that the Economic and Social Council may convene meetings of high-level representatives to promote international dialogue on the critical issues pertaining to adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development, as well as on policies for addressing them through international cooperation, and in this context, the Council may consider dedicating one high-level segment before the year 2001 to human settlements and the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, with the active involvement and participation of, inter alia, the specialized agencies, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund;

17. Emphasizes that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with their respective mandates, should review and strengthen the mandate of the Commission on Human Settlements, taking into account the Habitat Agenda, as well as the need for synergy with related commissions and conference follow-ups and for a system-wide approach to its implementation;

18. Requests the Commission on Human Settlements at its forthcoming session, in 1997, to review its programme of work in order to ensure an effective follow-up and implementation of the outcome of the Conference, in a manner consistent with the functions and contributions of other relevant organs of the United Nations system, and make recommendations thereon to the Economic and Social Council within the framework of the review of the activities of its subsidiary bodies;

19. Invites the Secretary-General to undertake in the light of the review of the mandate of the Commission on Human Settlements, a comprehensive and in-depth assessment of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements with a view to its revitalization, to present terms of reference and a preliminary report on this assessment for the consideration of the Commission at its sixteenth session, and to make a final report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session;

20. Requests the Secretary-General, in accordance with paragraph 229 of the Habitat Agenda and in consultation with the Commission on Human Settlements, to ensure more effective functioning of the Centre by, inter alia, providing sufficient human and financial resources within the regular budget of the United Nations;

21. Requests the Commission on Human Settlements to review at its sixteenth session, its working methods in order to involve in its work the representatives of local authorities or international associations of local authorities, as appropriate, and the relevant actors of civil society, particularly the private sector and non-governmental organizations, in the field of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development, taking into account the rules of procedure of the Commission on Human Settlements and the relevant provisions of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996;

22. Decides that the Commission on Human Settlements, as a standing committee of the Economic and Social Council, should have a central role in monitoring, within the United Nations system, the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and advising the Council thereon;

23. Recommends that the Economic and Social Council, in the context of the overall review process of its subsidiary bodies, and within the context of the follow-up to General Assembly resolution 50/227, should review the periodicity of the meetings of the Commission on Human Settlements, taking into account the need for full and effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda;

24. Reaffirms that the Commission on Human Settlements, in developing its work programme, should examine the Habitat Agenda and consider how to integrate in its programme of work the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), and should consider how it could further develop its catalytic role in promoting adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development;

25. Reaffirms also that the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements shall be designated as a focal point for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda;

26. Requests the Secretary-General to include the implementation of the Habitat Agenda in the mandates of the existing inter-agency task forces of the Administrative Committee on Coordination to facilitating an integrated and coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda;

27. Acknowledges the importance of the regional and subregional activities undertaken during the preparations for the Conference, including the regional strategies, plans and declarations adopted as part of the preparatory process, and invites the regional commissions, other regional and subregional organizations and the regional development banks, to examine the results of the Conference within their respective mandates with a view to identifying the actions to be taken at the regional and subregional levels for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda;

28. Emphasizes that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should, where appropriate, promote subregional and regional cooperation in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, that the regional commissions, within their mandates and in cooperation with regional intergovernmental organizations and banks, could consider convening high-level meetings to review progress made in implementing the outcome of Habitat II, exchange views on their respective experiences, particularly on best practices, and adopt appropriate measures, that such meetings could involve, as appropriate, the participation of the principal financial and technical institutions, and that the regional commissions should report to the Council on the outcome of such meetings;

29. Requests all the relevant United Nations organizations and specialized agencies to identify the specific actions that they will undertake, within their mandates, towards the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, and in that context invites them to inform the Administrative Committee on Coordination of their actions and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, through the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1997, on their specific plans and activities;

30. Invites the Bretton Woods institutions to be actively involved in the implementation and the follow-up to the Conference, and to enhance their cooperation with the United Nations system for that purpose;

31. Reaffirms that the demand for shelter and infrastructural services in human settlements is continuously increasing and that communities and countries, especially developing countries, have difficulty in mobilizing adequate financial resources to meet the rapidly rising costs of shelter, services and physical infrastructure, and reaffirms further that new and additional financial resources from various sources are necessary to achieve the goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world, and that existing resources available to developing countries - public, private, multilateral, bilateral, domestic and external - need to be enhanced through appropriate and flexible mechanisms and economic instruments to support adequate shelter and sustainable human settlements development;

32. Stresses that the full and effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda, in particular in all developing countries, especially those in Africa and the least developed countries, will require the mobilization of additional financial resources from various sources at the national and international levels and more effective development cooperation in order to promote assistance for shelter and human settlements activities;

33. Invites all Governments and the international community to consider the role of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation in the follow-up of the Habitat Agenda and to consider the scope for providing further support for the Foundation in its activities, taking into account the need to continue to improve its effectiveness;

34. Requests the programmes and funds of the United Nations system and the regional commissions, consistent with their respective mandates, to fully support the effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda, particularly at the field level, as appropriate;

35. Also requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, through the Economic and Social Council, on the implementation of the present resolution;

36. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-second session a sub-item entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)".